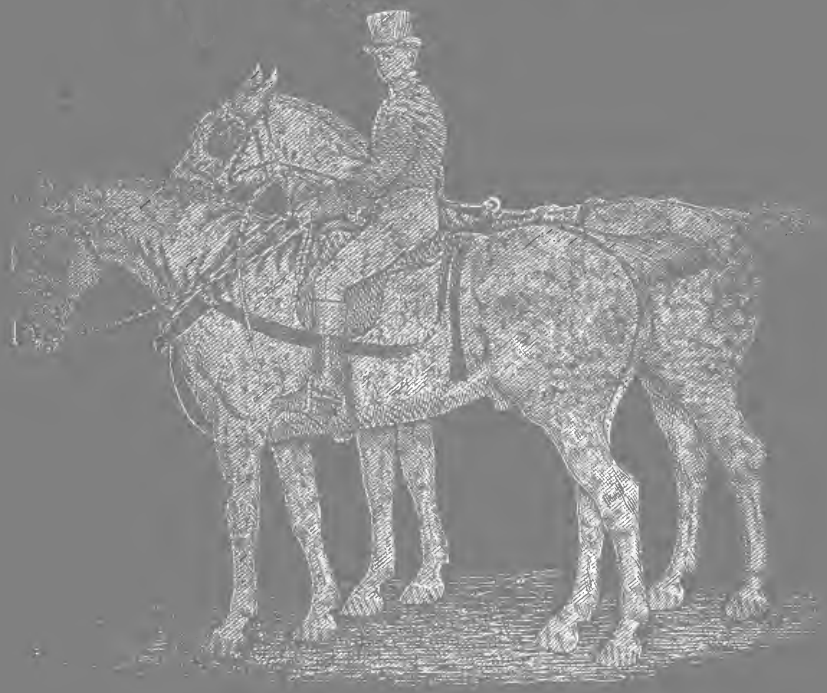
THE HARNESS HORSE



BY

SIR WALTER GILBEY, Bart.

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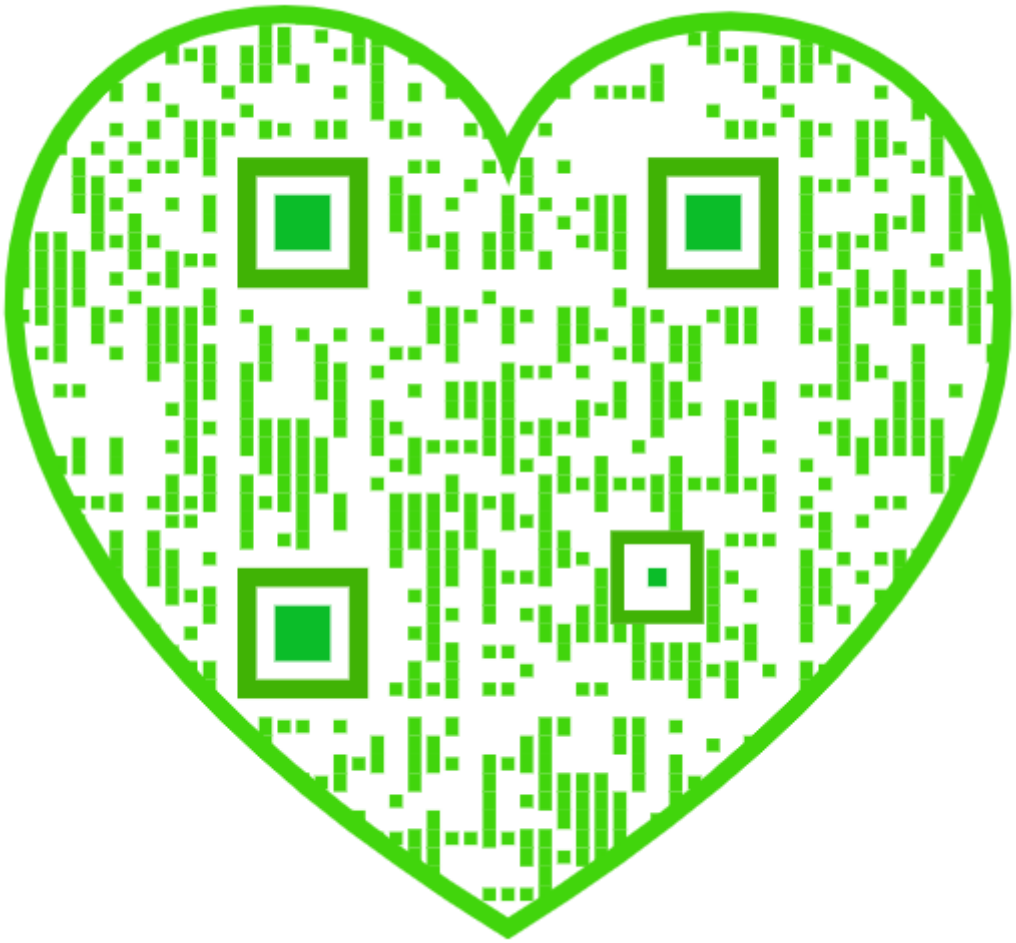

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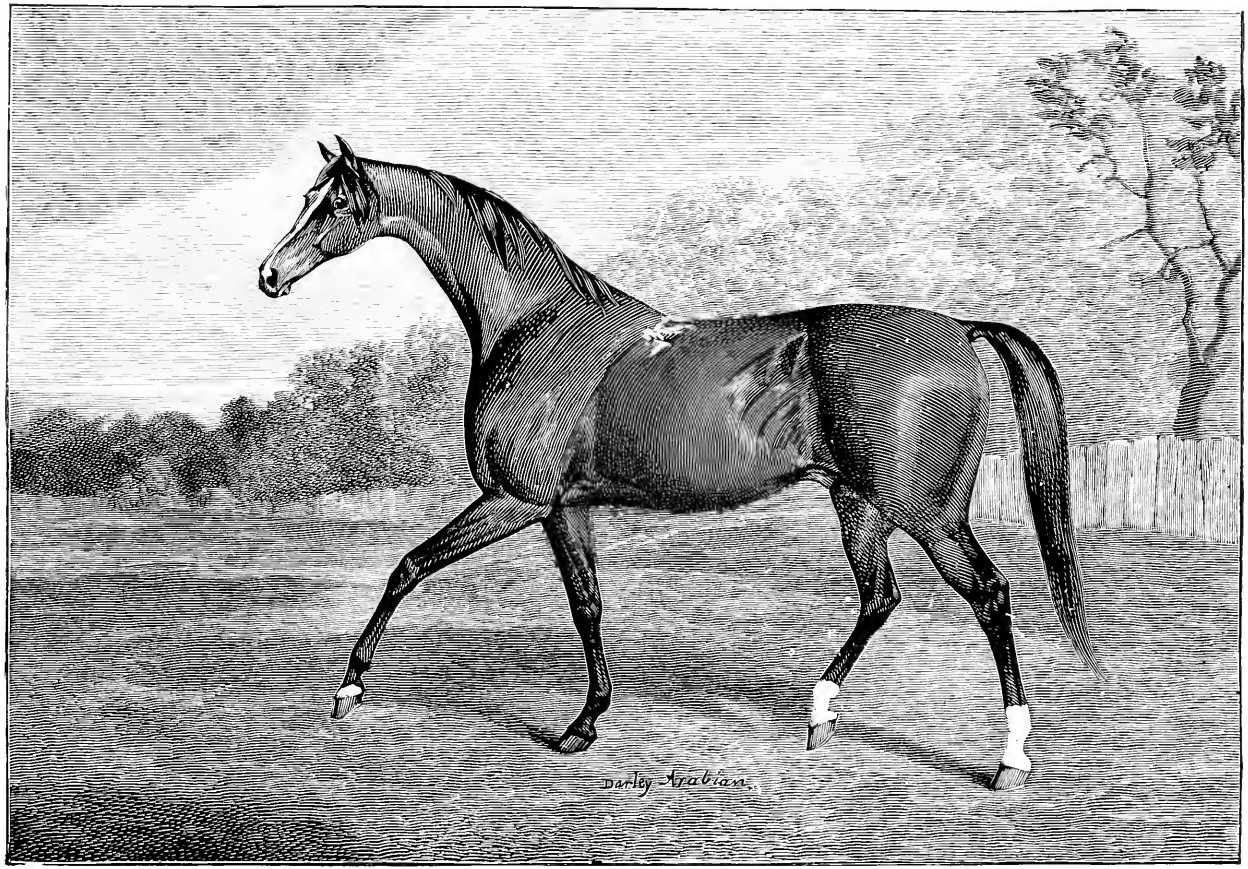

THE DARLEY ARABIAN (Imported into England 1706.)

THIRD EDITION.

THE HARNESS HORSE

BY

SIR WALTER GILBEY, Bart.

ILLUSTRATED

VINTON & Co., Ltd.
9, NEW BRIDGE STREET, LONDON, E.C.
1898

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1954 g. Pearson

I take it for granted that the readers of these few pages are at one with the writer in regarding preservation of the character of our English horses as a matter of high national importance. I need therefore make no apology for calling attention to the desirability of breeding horses for harness, and releasing Britain from her present state of dependence for these upon the foreign breeder.

Elsenham Hall, Essex,
July, 1898.

THE HARNESS HORSE.

REASONS FOR BREEDING SADDLE-HORSES IN THE PAST.

It cannot be denied that we as a nation devote our attention almost exclusively to the breeding of saddle-horses, namely for racing, steeple-chasing and hunting; and in doing so we betray our inherent taste for sport. Time was when the saddle-horse held a position in our national economy which compelled exclusive attention to the breeding of such stock. In the days of Queen Elizabeth, when England was traversed by none but bridle-paths, when roads for wheeled traffic, in the absence of coaches, were unknown, travelling was accomplished and merchandise transported on horse-back; and of necessity the saddle-horse and pack-horse stood alone in their importance. With the introduction of roads, however, and their rapid spread all over the kingdom, the economic necessity for the

saddle and pack-horse disappeared; and the places of these animals were taken, in very large degree at all events, by the coach-horse and post-horse.

When railways became established and it was recognised that the coaching era was at its close, there prevailed a strong feeling that harness horses would no longer be required; and this belief, combined with the depression in agriculture at the period between 1835 and 1845, led the farmers to abandon horse-breeding and sell their mares to go abroad.

THE ROADSTERS OF THE COACHING PERIOD.

In the coaching and posting days the roadster was an absolute necessity, and universal and continuous demand naturally produced on the spot a supply of horses in which soundness of constitution and limb, speed and endurance were indispensable. The past history of the Norfolk and Yorkshire breeds is full of passages reflecting their merits. Mr. H. R. Phillips in his evidence before the Lords' Committee on Horses in 1873, says: "The Hackney is a class of itself. We date them back from Mr. Theobald's 'Old Champion,' which cost

1,000 guineas." In the earlier days of Mr. H. H. Dixon ("The Druid,"), when the Norfolk hackneys were growing scarce, that authority wrote ("*Post and Paddock*," 1856): "About a quarter of a century since Norfolk had an almost European fame for its strong-made short-legged hackneys, which could walk five miles an hour and trot at the rate of twenty. Fireaway, Marshland, Shales, and The Norfolk Cob were locomotive giants in those days, and the latter was the sire of Bond's Norfolk Phenomenon, 15·2, who was sold to go into Yorkshire in the year 1836, and afterwards went to Scotland when he had seen his twentieth summer, and astonished his canny admirers by trotting two miles in six minutes. Those now left are descended from these breeds, but as they arrive at maturity they are sold to go to France." The writer goes on to remark that "Four or five very good hackney sires are still in the county, and among them Baxter's red roan, Performer, 15·3, foaled 1850, for which 500 guineas is said to have been refused. The chestnut, Jackson's Prickwillow, 15·2, and a son of his, Prickwillow, out of a very noted mare belonging to Mr. Charles Cooke, of Litcham, which is said never to have been

'out-stepped,' is also highly spoken of. Mr. Wright, of Tring, has a bay, 'Shales,' 16 hands, foaled 1851, with rare action; and a black 14·2 cob, foaled in 1852, of Mr. Baldwin's, has earned a much more worthy mention than we can give him, by winning the first hackney stallion prize at the last Norfolk Agricultural Show. Lord Hastings has two hackney stallions of the Fireaway breed, which are occasionally seen in harness." A grand example of the Norfolk Hackney at this period was Hazard, a cabriolet horse belonging to Lord Chesterfield. The symmetrical shape and bold action of this horse is well shown in the portrait here reproduced. Hazard could trot at the rate of sixteen miles an hour, and when put up for sale at Tattersall's in 1836 was purchased for 330 guineas by the Marquis of Abercorn.

Earlier records show that in the seventeenth century Norfolk had a reputation for its roadsters Marshall, in his *Rural Economy of Norfolk*, published in 1795, says that before Queen Anne's reign the farmers of the country used an active breed of horses which could not only trot, but gallop; and the curious team-races this writer describes, prove that that Norfolk breed of the seven-

HAZARD.

teenth and eighteenth centuries was sure-footed as well as active. The team consisted of five horses which were harnessed to an empty waggon; thus Marshall speaks as an eye witness:—"A team following another upon a common broke into a gallop, and, unmindful of the ruts, hollow cavities and rugged ways, contended strenuously for the lead, while the foremost team strove as eagerly to keep it. Both were going at full gallop, as fast indeed as horses in harness could go for a considerable distance, the drivers standing upright in their respective waggons." There can be no doubt but that the Norfolk Hackney traces his descent on the dam's side to this breed; of his pedigree on the male side we shall speak later.

BREEDING STOCK SOLD TO FOREIGNERS.

The "almost European fame" of these horses was achieved at serious cost to ourselves: in the middle of this century the best of the Norfolk Hackneys were sold to go to France, where their intrinsic merits were appreciated; and the export trade in roadster breeding stock has been continued ever since.

It is a common cry that for years many of

our best mares have been bought up by the foreigner; it is true that the Continental buyer has purchased mares in preference to geldings; and in exercising this preference the Continental buyer has shown his longer sightedness. For immediate use, for the direct purpose as a saddle or harness animal, the mare is quite as useful as the gelding and, while costing no more, has the further value to which the foreign purchaser with his thrifty instincts is fully alive; the mare is used to breed from when her career of active service is at an end, whereas the value of the gelding when past work is neither more nor less than that the knacker is pleased to set upon his carcase. Further, there has long been a strong prejudice in England against mares for harness, the result being that mares could be purchased at a lower price than geldings; a fact, in conjunction with the advantage already indicated, which has not been without its influence on the Continental buyer.

Within the last thirty years or more the effect of the Continental demand for roadster breeding stock has been more keenly felt than ever, owing to the fact that foreign buyers have materially raised the standard of their requirements. Mr. J. East, of the

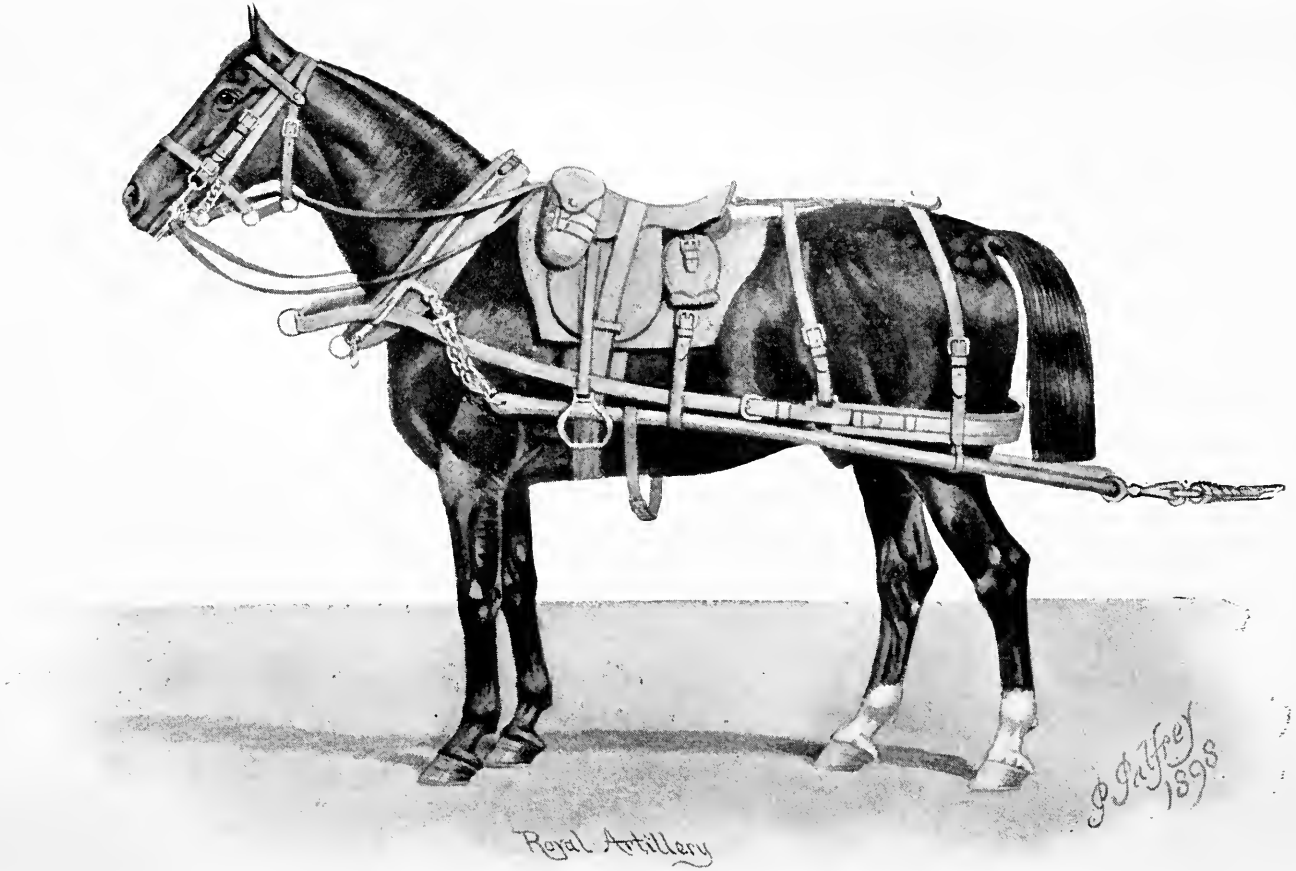
well-known firm of Phillips & East, in giving evidence before the Select Committee of the House of Lords on Horses in 1873, said of the French agents: "They buy the very best and they get mares; you cannot get them to buy a bad mare." They did not confine their purchases to any particular breed of mares: roomy hunting mares and mares of that class were eagerly purchased to cross with Hackney sires. As with the mares so with the stallions. All the experts examined before that Committee agreed that the foreign buyers out-bid the English for animals of good class, sparing neither pains nor money to secure them. The late Mr. H. R. Phillips informed the Committee that his firm sent "from thirty to forty every year of those roadster stallions to France and Italy and different countries." They sent as many as they could procure. When asked how the number of roadster stallions reported at that date compared with the number reported ten or fifteen years previously (say about the year 1858), Mr. Phillips stated that "The number has not increased because they (the foreigners) have always taken as many as they could get." It was as well the good stallions should have followed the pick of the mares, as, in Mr. Phillips' words (answer to Ques-

tion 309), "you see we have only got the mares to breed from which the foreigners did not think good enough to take away." We can hardly congratulate ourselves upon such means of escape from the otherwise inevitable deterioration of the stock which remained.

THE CONTINENTAL POLICY.

The discriminating intelligence the foreigner displays in making his purchases from us is the keynote of his whole policy as a breeder; his success in developing a superior class of roadster is due to the judgment and selective skill he has brought to bear upon the vital matter of mating and line breeding. By constant attention to the principles of mating, he has produced animals true to type; has, in fact, established a breed whose conformation, grand carriage, and elastic step are *constant*, to use a breeding term, and which is admittedly superior to the horse bred for the same purpose in Great Britain and Ireland.

Nor have we far to look for the stimulating influence which has caused the Continental breeder to devote his attention to the production of horses for road work. We, in



R.H.A. Gun Team Horse.

our insular security, have never felt so keenly as European nations the necessity for supplying the equine needs of vast armies; and while we have been able to devote ourselves to breeding horses for racing, steeplechasing, and hunting, the Governments of France, Germany, Hungary, Austria and Italy have, on principle, encouraged the evolution of an animal for road work; a class of horse on which they can depend for cavalry, artillery, transport—in fact, for all military purposes.

CONTINENTAL DEMAND FOR HACKNEY SIRES.

In 1883, two years before the death of Mr. H. R. Phillips, the writer had an interview at Wilton Crescent, Belgrave Square, with that gentleman, who purchased Phenomenon to go to Yorkshire. Mr. Phillips then gave the following account of that famous horse and his influence on the Yorkshire breed :—

"The horses in Yorkshire were not good enough for the London trade, and about the year 1838 I purchased from Mr. John Bond, of Cawston, Norfolk, the celebrated sire Phenomenon for Mr. Robert Ramsdale, of Market Weighton, Yorkshire. I reckoned him at that time the best stallion in England. In height 15 hands 2 inches, on well formed short legs, good feet, deep girth, quarter symmetrical, full of courage,

with wonderfully all-round true action; and Phenomenon proved a valuable sire, as the Yorkshire mares, although sizable, lacked girth, symmetrical form and action. The stallions in use at that time, in the district of Market Weighton, were very inferior and leggy."

The success of Phenomenon in Yorkshire induced Mr. Phillips to recommend his Continental customers to purchase sires of this breed for use in their studs. His recommendations were adopted, and with what measure of success we may gather from the statement of Mr. Hetherington, who is a large buyer of horses for Continental Governments. He stated in his evidence before the Irish Commissioners of Horse Breeding that he had purchased Hackney stallions for the French *Haras* Department for the last three-and-twenty years; buying during that period from twenty to upwards of thirty stallions each year. These Hackney sires are used to procure Artillery horses, because "they do not want to canter, and they improve the courage of the native mares." Mr. Hetherington adds, "they are very popular with the breeders; they are used in preference to the thoroughbred, and improve their horses more than anything." It would be difficult to furnish more convincing evidence of the merits of the Hackney than this.

THE ANGLO-NORMAN BREED.

The success of the French in establishing a breed of road-horses from a foundation of Hackney blood, is nowhere more noteworthy than in Normandy. So marked is the pre-eminent merits of the animals bred in the Province, that they are known on the Continent as the "Anglo-Norman" breed; and, what is much more to the point, their superiority is so unanimously recognised that Government agents of Austria, Hungary, and most other Continental nations, regularly visit Normandy to purchase their stallions in preference to buying them in England. Geographical convenience and diminished risk of transport may have something to do with this preference; but we may be quite sure that if the Anglo-Norman stallions were appreciably inferior to the sires obtainable in this country, neither convenience, reduced risk, nor lesser expense would induce these sagacious buyers to accept the Anglo-Norman sire instead of the English-bred horse. Surely these facts compel the reflection that we still possess the best materials to work upon; we have the "foundation stock," and its possession should stimulate our endeavours to maintain the

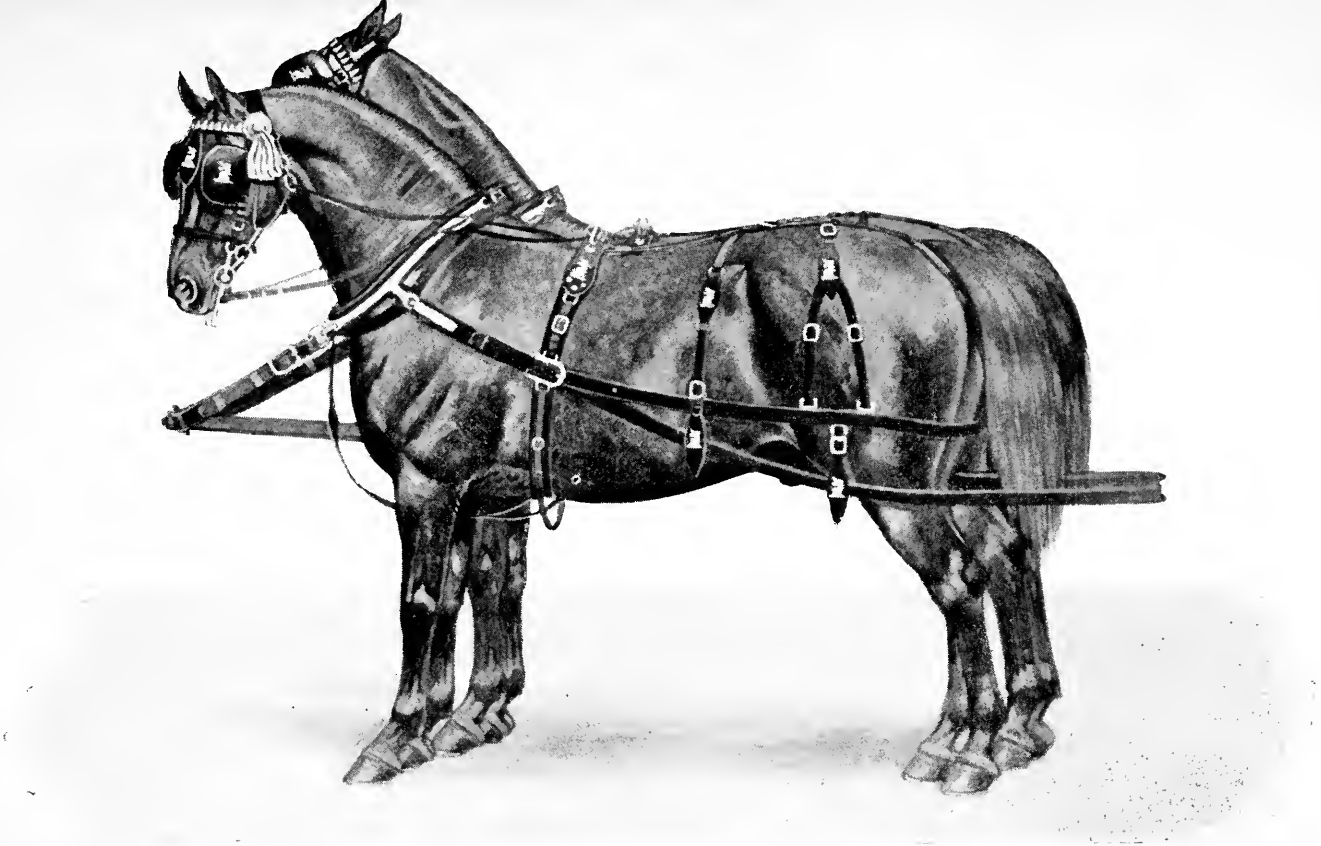
historical reputation of Great Britain as the breeding ground of the best horses in the world.

WANT OF CARRIAGE HORSES IN ENGLAND.

Having indulged to the full our preference for breeding horses suitable for purposes of sport and pleasure, and having sold the bulk of our roadster breeding stock to the foreign buyers who were only too glad to get it at any price, we have hitherto rendered ourselves almost completely dependent upon Continental breeders for our supplies of high class harness horses.

English dealers who make a speciality of horses for harness and general road use go abroad in search of the animals they require, knowing perfectly well that upstanding carriage horses, possessed of shape and action, are to be found in the breeding centres of the Continent. Visit the stables of any of the large London dealers who trade in the best description of harness horses, and if the owner see fit to disclose facts in connection with his business, this statement will be verified up to the hilt.

It will no doubt surprise many people when they are told that those beautiful



BAROUCHE HORSES, 16.2 to 17 hands.

match pairs of carriage horses, standing from 15·2 to 16·2, and the good-looking teams in private coaches which are among the greatest attractions of our West-end streets and fashionable resorts in the London season, are not the English horses they are fondly believed to be; they are, with few exceptions, importations from the breeding centres of France, Germany, Hungary, Austria, Italy and Holland.

It is a matter of common knowledge that the cream-coloured or pale dun horses used in Her Majesty's carriage on State occasions are Hanoverians or of Hanoverian descent; but it is not known, and perhaps would not willingly be acknowledged, that the grand-looking bays and dark browns with which the Royal and Viceregal stables are stocked are not the English or Irish bred horses we would preferably associate with British royalty, but are, a large proportion at all events, importations from abroad. The same applies with equal truth to the animals with which the state carriages of our city magnates are horsed.

Enterprising and self-denying as our French neighbours have been in their exertions to obtain the best of our breeding stock to supply their military requirements, there

is necessarily a limit to the price the Republic can pay her home breeders for young animals; and the French authorities view with impatience and dislike the trade which has been forced upon British dealers in high-class harness horses by the paucity of suitable animals in England. In course of his most interesting and instructive evidence before the Lords' Committee on Horses in 1873, Colonel Conolly, Military Attaché to the Embassy in Paris, said that the remount officers in France "complain very much of all their best Norman horses going to England for carriage horses. They say directly there is a good promising young horse or mare, it is sure to go off to England." The special superiority of the Anglo-Norman breed has already been noticed.

LONDON DEALERS PURCHASE ABROAD.

Though the countries specified above are those whence we obtain the bulk of our superior harness horses, our purchases are by no means restricted to these markets. Enterprising London dealers now have in America, Canada, and other countries their agents ever on the outlook for good-looking animals suitable for carriage use and for road work in London and other large cities.

It is important to note the evidence given by the two largest jobmasters in London before the Royal Commission on Irish Horse Breeding, in 1897. Mr. Henry Withers, referring to a period ten or twelve years back, said "We went abroad a great deal and for four or five years we had one buyer in Lexington and another in New York." He proceeded to say "We do not want to go to America or to go abroad if we could only buy in England or Ireland, but American horses at that time were very dear. I remember buying ten horses that just came off the boat at Liverpool, and gave £110 apiece for them. The week before last I went from London to Hanover, where I bought six horses; from there I went to Brussels; from Brussels I went to Ghent, where I bought four; from there I went to Lille. I went to Paris where I saw a large quantity of horses. I bought two."

Mr. Wimbush in course of his evidence, stated that he began to go to Normandy for horses about ten years previously. "The horses there are not very large, 15·3 or 15·2, and occasionally up to 16 hands; but they are horses of beautiful appearance, very handsome, and splendid goers, they not only step well, but go most excellently on their hind legs."

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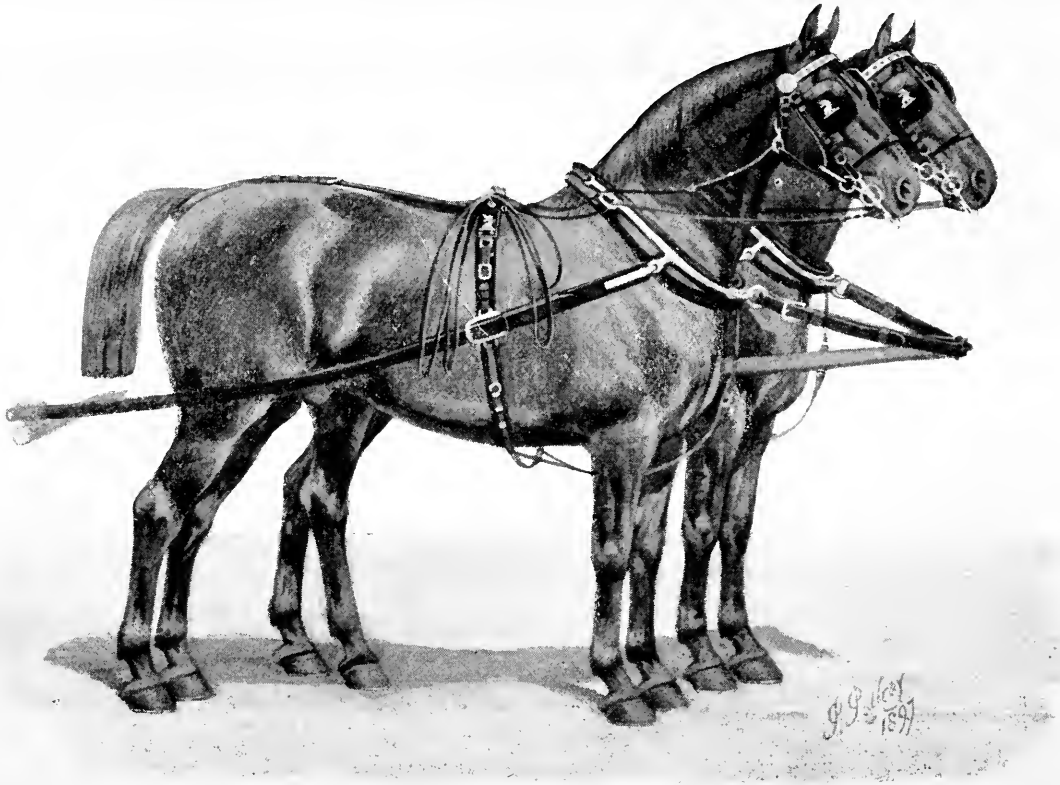
IMPORTS OF HORSES.

The dimensions which have been attained by this trade in foreign horses is proved by the Annual Returns; let us see what these figures can tell us. We imported:—

In the ten years, 1863-1872 ... 29,131 horses
,, ,, ,, 1873-1882 ... 197,092 ,,
,, ,, ,, 1883-1892 ... 145,763 ,,

The falling-off in the importations of the ten years ended in 1892 from the total of the preceding decade is sufficiently great to invite criticism; but it is to be feared we may not lay the flattering unction to our souls that the decrease proves our growing independence of the foreign supply. The reduced importations of those ten years were due, it cannot be doubted, to the depressed condition of agriculture and the reduced incomes of those dependent upon land during that period—a depression which would of necessity make itself felt primarily upon indulgence in such luxuries as high-class carriage horses. That this explanation is correct seems proved, to some extent at least, by the returns for the next four years, 1893-96, which period, as we all know, has witnessed some considerable revival. In the



LANDAU HORSES, 15.3 to 16 hands.

five years 1893-97, we imported 160,861 horses; and if we maintain the average until the year 1902, to complete the decade, the total for the current period of ten years will be 321,722 horses.

As proof of returning prosperity, these figures, no doubt, are eminently satisfactory; but that is not the light in which they are likely to appear to the man who has at heart the interests of British horse-breeding. During the last six years, to go no farther back, we have paid away £4,553,846, on the average a sum of over £758,900 per annum, for horses. It is not pretended, of course, that all this money has been laid out on high-class carriage horses. The totals include animals of every grade: from those that are extremely desirable down to those which are not. It is of no great moment to the British breeders whether they or their Continental neighbours supply the British coster with his pony. There must always be a demand for cheap animals, and it does not matter much who supplies them; but these totals embrace a large and increasing proportion of a class of horse which, from every point of view, it is exceedingly desirable we should breed at home, namely, horses of the best class for road work.

VALUE OF HORSES EXPORTED AND IMPORTED.

The Official Returns show the extent of our trade in horses; these are the figures for the last six years available :—

	Exports of Horses.			Imports of Horses.		
Year.	Number of Horses.	Total Value.	Average Value per Head.	Number of Horses.	Total Value.	Average Value per Head.[1]
		£	£ s.		£	£ s.
1892	11,233	563,364	50 3	20,994	425,401	20 5
1893	11,962	507,762	42 9	13,707	376,819	27 9
1894	16,457	449,804	27 6	22,866	548,058	23 19
1895	21,564	549,882	25 10	34,092	921,490	27 0
1896	29,480	671,562	22 15	40,667	1,027,736	25 5
1897	34,536	825,926	23 12	49,519	1,254,342	25 6
	125,232	3,568,300		181,845	4,553,846	

[1] Note.—These figures include the selling price, £6 to £8, of many thousands of ponies from Russia, Sweden, and Norway.

It will be observed in regard to the exports, first, that the number of horses we send abroad has been increasing with each recurring year; and, secondly, that until 1897, when a comparatively insignificant rise occurs, the value has been decreasing, showing that the class of animal we export is not what it was six years ago.

As regards the imports, it must be observed parenthetically that 1893 was an exceptional year; with the exception of that twelve-month the annual returns since 1886, when we received 11,027 horses from abroad, show a rapid and almost uniformly steady

increase, until in 1897 we purchased more than twice the number of horses we purchased in 1892 ; and what is quite as significant, particularly in connection with the figures relating to exports, paid a higher average price for them.

The difference between the average price received for our exports and that paid for imported horses would convey a more accurate impression of the state of affairs could we eliminate from the former the large sums paid by foreign Governments for our best thoroughbred sires. The occasional sale of such an animal as Ormonde for such a figure as £30,000, and Galtee More for £21,000, must be taken into account when considering the average price received for exports. In short, we are buying expensive horses from the foreigner and obtaining only low prices for those produced by our want of system in breeding.

Now, we know what prices carriage horses command in the London market — from £200 to £300 for first-class single horses, and any sum from £500 to £1,000 for match pairs—and the difference between the minimum sum that will buy a harness horse of high stamp and the maximum average quoted—£27 9s. in 1893—is so wide as to

compel the reminder that a moiety of our imported horses are of the cheapest sort, including many ponies, worth, at most from £6 to £8, and also droves of animals worth little more. It is necessary to emphasise this factor in the statistical position because its effect is to bring down the averages to a level which contravenes our argument.

It would be highly interesting and instructive if the statisticians of the Board of Trade would differentiate broadly between the classes of the animal imported so far as to show, say, the number of horses whose value was declared respectively at over £10 per head, £25, £50, £75, and £100. We import few valuable heavy draught horses nowadays, no hunters, and only an occasional race-horse from Australia and America, so few as not to appreciably affect the averages. These negative factors in the case require no proof, they are matters of common knowledge; and by the method of differentiation suggested we should see at a glance exactly how many valuable harness horses we were receiving each year.

There would of course still remain a difference between the "declared value" of importations and the actual sale price; but upon that disparity we need not lay stress;

its existence is a commercial fact, and the figures with which the private individual is concerned are those which represent the final value, that is, the sum he has to pay for a brougham horse or a match pair which will satisfy an English gentleman's exacting taste. In the absence of such graduated statistics, however, it may be asserted without fear of contradiction that foreign carriage horses for years have been streaming into this country to realise the highest prices obtainable.

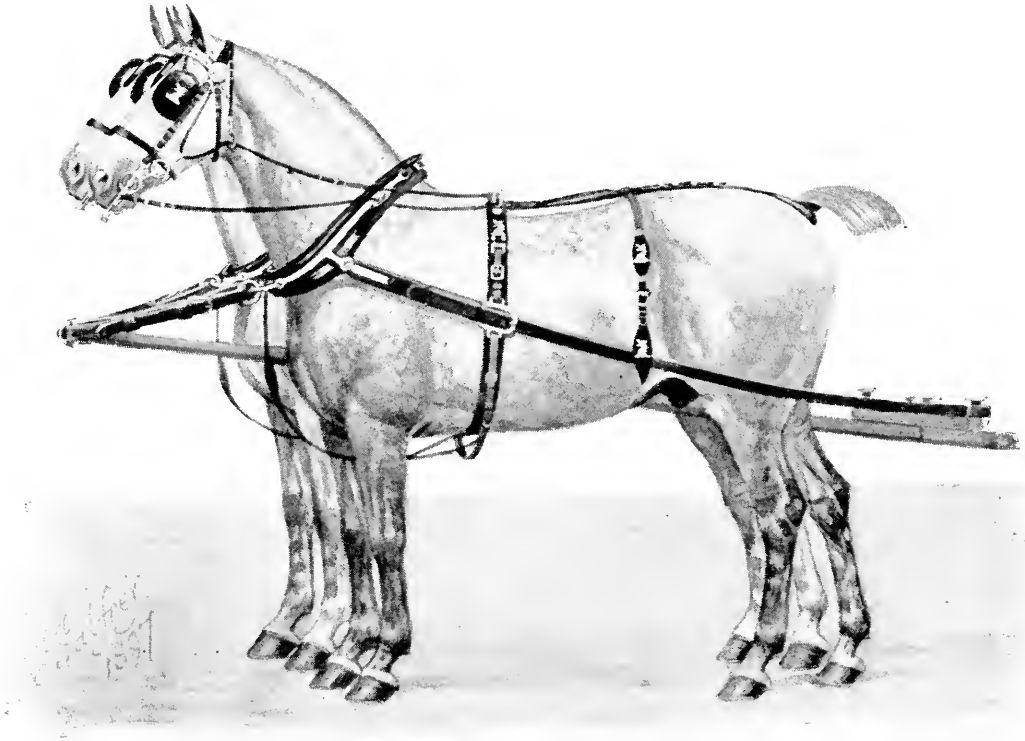
HORSES CAN BE BRED FOR ALL PURPOSES.

It is well known among breeders, not only of the horse but of any animal, that continued endeavour to develop and perpetuate one particular quality, while it results in greater perfection of that sought characteristic, is always accompanied by manifest deterioration in other attributes. Take the thoroughbred race-horse, for example: the result of directing attention exclusively to *speed* has been the sacrifice to some extent of such qualities as action and stamina. For generations now we have bred for speed and speed only, with the perfectly natural consequence that the qualities which are not

primarily essential to a successful turf career have to a very great extent disappeared.

It goes without saying that horses can be bred as required to fulfil the wishes and requirements of man. In this country the blood of the thoroughbred has been sought and used as though swift movement at the *gallop* on the turf and that alone were the only essential; in America the trotter has been carefully cultivated to ensure the highest speed on the *trotting* track, other qualifications being ignored as completely as in England for the development of the one remunerative quality. Nothing else is to be expected: the great value of the stakes offered for racing and trotting naturally compels studious endeavour to breed only such horses as shall be likely to win money.

The thoroughbred sire is the only animal from which to breed race-horses; his inherent galloping action and speed are so implanted in him by in-breeding during nearly two hundred years that the typical race-horse in England is as rarely suitable to beget stock for general purposes as is his collateral descendant the American trotting sire. Let it not be supposed for one moment that it is sought to disparage the English race-horse or the American trotter



VICTORIA HORSES, 15·1 to 16 hands.

for the purpose for which each respectively has been produced with such infinite care ; but it is necessary to lay stress on the cardinal point in view, namely, that successful endeavour to develop one and only one quality involves the depreciation of other qualities as a natural consequence.

ACTION AT THE TROT *v.* ACTION AT THE GALLOP.

The action of the horse at the trot differs widely from the action at the gallop ; and when it becomes necessary to perform a long journey, which requires the horse to travel on several successive days, the trot is the pace on which dependence must be placed ; to attempt the accomplishment of such a journey at the gallop would obviously bring the horse to an early standstill. We have bred to secure these paces in their highest perfection, and having established distinct breeds each as nearly perfect for its purpose as is humanly possible, we must measure each by its appropriate standard of merit.

William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle, put this point in simple language in a work published by Thomas Melbourne so long ago as 1667. His Grace was a great

authority on equine matters in his day, and we cannot do better than quote him on the subject. "On the perfect shape of a horse," he says, "in a word I will show you the ridiculousness of setting down the perfect shape of a dog! A mastiff is not a greyhound; nor a greyhound a Lancashire hound; nor a Lancashire hound a Little Beagle; and yet all very fine dogs in their kind." Precisely: the English race-horse, hunter, and cart-horse are "all very fine horses in their kind," because with each we have for generations taken the utmost pains to develop it and breed it true to type; but we have left it to the foreigner to supply us with harness-horses, and he has shown us that it is equally possible to produce the high-class carriage horses we have neglected for our own requirements.

ORGANISATIONS FOR THE PROMOTION OF HORSE BREEDING.

Distinct organisations have for some years made distinct breeds of horses their special care, and it may truly be said that of these England possesses the best in the world. We may divide these organisations or societies into two classes; those which make it their aim to direct and improve the breed-

ing of *Light Horses*, and those which care for the interests of breeders of *Heavy Horses* for draught and agriculture. The following list shows that breeders are well represented :—

LIGHT HORSES.

General Stud Book (for thoroughbreds).—Secretary, Mr. Edw. Weatherby, Old Burlington Street, London : and Newmarket.

Royal Commission on Horse Breeding.—Secretary, Mr. J. Herbert Taylor, 22, Great George Street, Westminster, S.W.

Hunters' Improvement Society.—Secretary, Mr. A. B. Charlton, 12, Hanover Square, London, W.

Hackney Horse Society.—Secretary, Mr. H. F. Euren, 12, Hanover Square, London, W.

Cleveland Bay Horse Society.—Secretary, Mr. F. W. Horsfall, Potto Grange, Northallerton, Yorkshire.

Yorkshire Coach Horse Society.—Secretary, Mr. J. White, Appleton Roebuck, Yorkshire.

Trotting Union of Great Britain and Ireland.—Secretary, Mr. E. Cathcart, 7, Trinity Square, Brixton, London.

Polo Pony Society.—Secretary, Mr. Frederick R. Hill, Felhampton Court, Church Stretton.

New Forest Pony Society.—Secretary, Mr. H. St. Barbe, Lymington, Hants.

Shetland Pony Society. — Secretary, Mr. Robert R. Ross, 35, Market Street, Aberdeen.

HEAVY DRAUGHT HORSES.

Shire Horse Society. — Secretary, Mr. J. Sloughgrove, 12, Hanover Square, W.

Suffolk Horse Society.—Secretary, Mr. Fred Smith, Woodbridge, Suffolk.

Clydesdale Horse Society. — Secretary, Mr. Archibald MacNeilage, 93, Hope Street, Glasgow.

London Cart Horse Parade Society.—Mr. F. F. Euren, 12, Hanover Square, London, W.

TO ENCOURAGE THE BREEDING OF HARNESS HORSES.

Mention of these several organisations naturally leads one to enquire what can be done to enable Englishmen to breed sizable, good-looking harness horses of the stamp required to meet the ever-increasing demand.

To answer this we must adopt the remark of the Duke of Newcastle, before quoted, and ask (1) What is the proper shape and action of a carriage horse? (2) How have we failed to produce him? and (3) How is he to be bred? We must consider these points separately.

WHAT IS THE PROPER SHAPE AND ACTION OF A CARRIAGE HORSE?

To describe a perfect animal in writing is impossible; and the same may be said of pictorial illustrations; the attributes which go to secure the essential qualifications of the horse for active road work are beyond the power of pen or brush to record, and can only be appreciated in the moving animal by men conversant with those qualifications.

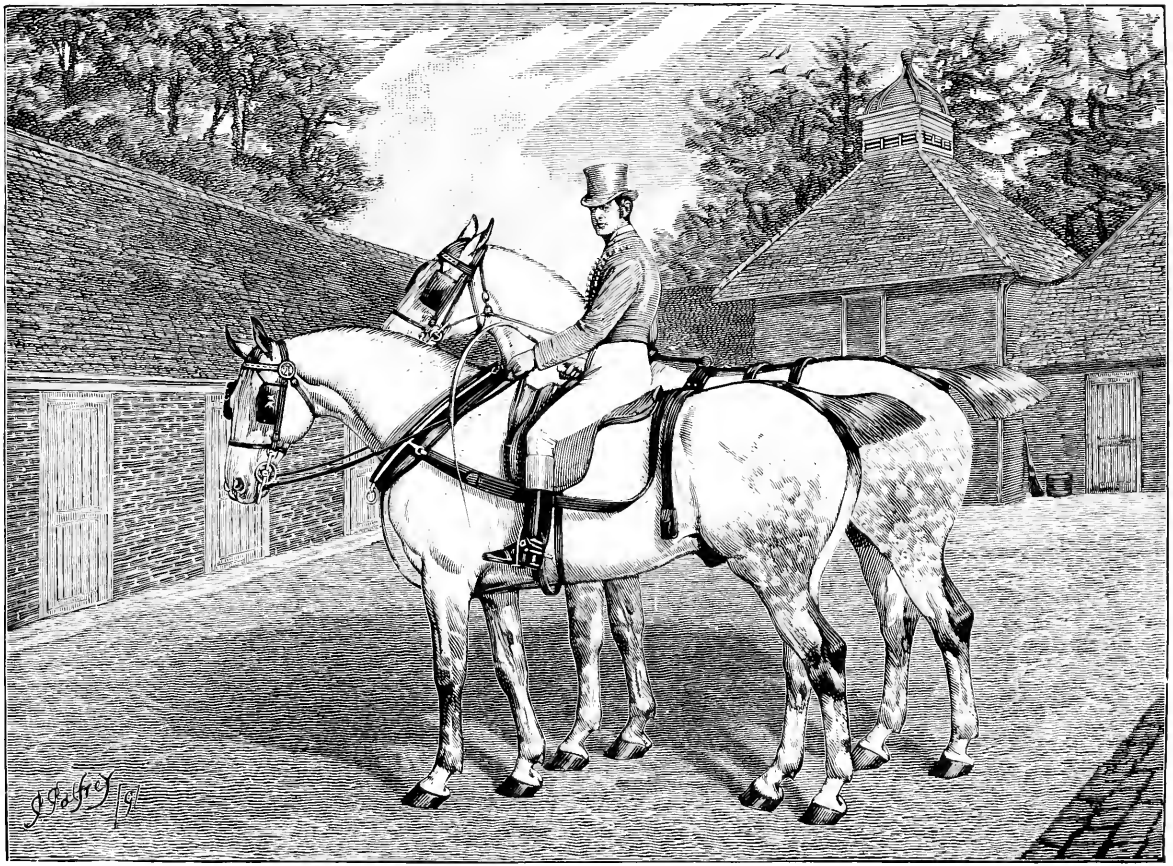
To say that the breeder's aim should be to produce the most valuable animal is to state a general proposition whose soundness no one will deny; and despite the unsatisfactoriness of verbal description it may be desirable to sketch the outline of the *perfect* carriage horse. He should be upstanding; the neck springing well from the shoulders, which should be deep and well set back into the loins; back not too short or cob-like; ribs

well arched; hind-quarters *broad* and muscular; and tail set high. In harness he must bend, or in other words, wear himself gaily, and be full of fire and animation; he must move with true, direct, and pliable shoulder and knee-action in front, and with freedom behind.

HOW HAVE WE FAILED TO PRODUCE THE CARRIAGE HORSE?

The reasons have already been given; when it was thought that railways would take the place of coach-horses and post-horses, we ceased to breed them and sold the vast majority of our breeding stock to foreign buyers. Although there has been a general and continuous demand for harness horses, we have failed to produce them, but our failure has been due to disinclination rather than inability; in other breeds we have achieved such success that Continental buyers will pay almost any sum to possess themselves of our best.

In producing cattle, sheep and pigs, English breeders stand pre-eminent, and the nations of the world depend upon us for their foundation stock, and for the fresh blood needed to improve and raise the standard



COACH, OR POST HORSES, 15.3 hands.

of their herds and flocks. Ever since the time of Robert Bakewell, who made so conspicuous a mark on the annals of stock-breeding in the last century, Englishmen have displayed marked judgment in their endeavours to establish distinct varieties of cattle, sheep, and pigs; and their successes remain to bear witness to the soundness of their methods. Among cattle we have now the Shorthorn, Hereford, Polled Angus, Devon, Sussex, Jersey, Guernsey, and others, each variety perfectly distinct in appearance; among sheep we find equally distinct breeds developed to the same standard of perfection; and again the same evidence of judicious selection in the case of the pig.

The carriage horse of high class stands alone among domestic animals as the one we cannot, or at all events do not, produce at home in numbers sufficient for our requirements. The haphazard method of breeding which is far too common in England is likely to produce horses fit for use in any sphere but in harness. Mr. E. Greene, M.P., made the following pregnant statement in course of the evidence he gave before the Lords' Horse Breeding Commission in 1873: "I think that harness horses are really the most

scarce animals; that is to say, a carriage horse, a phaeton horse or a horse to drive in a dog-cart. The qualifications for a hunter are not of the same description. With a hunter men put up with a good deal. A horse that will jump is called a hunter, and people manage to find horses in that way; but for a harness horse you want a certain amount of power and shape to fill the eye and they are very difficult to get." The English breeder's choice of a sire almost inevitably falls on a thoroughbred horse if one be available, and the thoroughbred has not the trotting action necessary in a harness horse; he has been bred to gallop, not to trot, and his progeny will resemble him. Mr. Greene said in reply to a question put by Lord Rosebery that unless the thoroughbred get a hunter, "the horse he gets is not a horse of great value from lack of action . . . . nothing is so valuable as a horse that steps well and that a thoroughbred does not often get."

THE SUCCESS OF FOREIGNERS IN BREEDING.

Those students of this important question who wish to realise for themselves what can be done by judicious mating, should start

with an open mind and make a tour through some of the breeding areas of Europe. The unbiassed traveller who set about his self-imposed task in a receptive spirit would soon be convinced that the French achieve the most marked success in breeding beautiful and valuable harness horses. The road horses produced by other nations are not far behind them, but there is no doubt that in France we find the best. For many years past the Government of the Republic have controlled, in a great measure, the breeding operations of the country. Responding to the spur of necessity the French authorities set themselves the task of ascertaining how the animal most serviceable for France as a nation could be produced; and, having settled this point, adopted and steadily pursued the policy which has resulted in giving the French the horse most suitable for military purposes; in other words, the ideal road horse. This stamp of animal in France and in other countries has been developed, as has been already shown, by the introduction of the Hackney stallion.

HOW TO BREED CARRIAGE HORSES.

A good Hackney stallion is the best horse in the world. It is not extreme speed merely

which makes either a good harness horse or the horse required for military purposes; it is strength, activity, quickness of perception, and docility; and all these qualities are as prominent in the Hackney as swiftness is in the thoroughbred horse. He has been tried on his merits in European countries, and has been retained on his merits; and on their merits alone, without enquiry into descent or pedigree, we pay high prices for his progeny sent over to us as carriage horses.

Fortunately for ourselves we still possess in our several breeds of horses material that cannot be equalled by those of any country in the world; we still possess the very best of the old Hackney breeding stock, and though it is as yet more remarkable for quality than quantity its numerical strength increases yearly, thanks largely to the exertions of the Hackney Horse Society during the fifteen years of its existence.

It is not, surely, too much to ask breeders to admit that the horses got in England by Hackneys from judiciously chosen mares are likely to be at least as good as horses got by Hackneys in France or Hungary? The breeding grounds of those countries are not superior to ours, nor do they possess any

great climatic advantages over those of England. Granting, therefore, that our opportunities are at least equal to those of our Continental neighbours, we can, without fear of challenge, assert that on the Hackney sire we must rely to breed the stock of which we stand in greatest need, namely, high-class upstanding carriage horses. It goes without saying that he must be used with discrimination and judgment; but if mated with sizable mares of his own breed, with thoroughbred mares, with hunter mares possessed of size and substance, or with big mares called in the trade *vanners* and having thoroughbred blood in their veins, his stock can be depended on to supply the class of animal we want.

THE MARKET FOR CARRIAGE HORSES.

Even when regarded as a business, we can hardly be surprised that the breeding of thoroughbreds and hunters should almost monopolise attention; the demand for high-class carriage horses is a town rather than a country demand, and appeals less to the resident in horse-breeding districts; but should not English breeders who rear horses for profit as well as for pleasure consider

whether it be not desirable in their own interests to devote more attention to the harness horse? Harness horses are in much greater demand than riding horses; it may fairly be estimated that for one riding horse in use, there are fifty harness horses. Passing reference has been made to the sums obtainable for brougham horses and for match pairs. That the moderate animals worth comparatively small sums in the market form the majority of stock *now* obtained is a point which should not be urged as deterrent; and for the reason that this is so largely the result of lack of care in mating. The success of the French confronts us as proof of this. The reorganisation of the Remounts Department of the Army too, has placed the breeder in a better position as regards disposal of his only moderate animals. There is always a market here for three-year-olds which do not give promise of furnishing into horses likely to command high prices; the reduction of the age from four to three makes no inconsiderable difference in the matter of profit. Given due care in mating, however, there is no reason why a highly remunerative proportion of young stock suitable for the London carriage horse market should

not be obtained. Can it be denied that the demand for harness horses of the best stamp is one that is pregnant with opportunity for the breeder who will use the Hackney sire? He has no superior as a getter of road horses, and his claim to be considered as *pure-bred* as the race-horse cannot be doubted.

THE PEDIGREE OF THE MODERN HACKNEY.

Incessant repetition of part of a truth is certain in course of time to elevate the fraction to the dignity of the whole; frequent reiteration of the one fact that our thoroughbreds are descended from a few horses of Eastern origin is therefore likely to obscure the larger fact that our thoroughbreds are not the only descendants of that Eastern stock. Modern thoroughbreds trace their descent to the Byerly Turk imported in 1689, to the Darley Arabian imported in 1706, and the Godolphin Arabian imported twenty-four years later. The term "thoroughbred" was adopted to denote the progeny of these three sires with the Royal Mares, called "King's Mares," imported into England from the East in the reign of King Charles; and it cannot be too often and too closely pressed home upon breeders that in

all Hackney pedigrees the foundation sire is found to be no other than that same Darley Arabian whose blood in the race-horse is the *cachet* of breeding fashion! There is diversity of opinion as to which one of these three Eastern sires wrought the greatest influence on our breed of horses and did most towards the establishment of the reputation England has obtained for her thoroughbreds; but there is no question as to the one of the three which was most beautiful in make and shape; and that was the Darley Arabian, imported about 1706 from Aleppo by Mr. Darley.

With scarcely an exception, the Hackney sires of to-day descend in the direct line from this famous race-horse. The Darley Arabian begat Flying Childers (foaled 1715), the speediest race-horse of his time, and considered by many a better horse than Eclipse; Flying Childers begat Blaze; and it was through Blaze that the county of Norfolk achieved fame for its breed of Hackneys. Blaze was the sire of the original Shales, foaled in 1755 out of a Norfolk mare. How directly the Hackneys of to-day are descended from the Darley Arabian, however, will be most clearly shown by giving the pedigree in the male line of the defunct Hackney sire Danegelt:—

The Darley Arabian, foaled 1702, begat
Flying Childers, foaled 1715, who begat
Blaze, foaled 1733, who begat
Shales (the original, 699), foaled 1755, who begat
Driver (187), foaled 1765, who begat
Fireaway (Jenkinson's, 201), foaled 1780, who begat
Fireaway (West's, 203), foaled 1800, who begat
Fireaway (Burgess', 208), foaled 1815, who begat
Wildfire (R. Ramsdale's, 864), foaled 1827, who begat
Phenomenon (P. Ramsdale's, 573), foaled 1835, who begat
Performer (Taylor's, 550), foaled 1840, who begat
Sir Charles (Beal's, 768), foaled 1843, who begat
Denmark (Bourdas's, 177), foaled 1862, who begat
Danegelt (174), foaled 1879, *died* 1894.

More than this—if remoteness of ancestry be held proof of purity of blood in equine as in human families, the Hackney must take precedence of the thoroughbred. If only as a matter of curiosity it is worth noting that

the Hackney can trace his English origin to an earlier date than the thoroughbred; he has in his veins the blood of the old English race-horse, tracing on the dam's side his descent from animals which ran on the English Turf before the days of Charles I., at a period when the great grandsires of the Darley and Godolphin Arabians were yet unfoaled.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE HACKNEY.

Let it be borne in mind, too, that the Hackney has more to recommend him than the true action and elegant carriage required of the high-class harness horse: good temper and graceful manners are peculiarly characteristic of the breed, and he possesses the soundest of constitutions, a quality above all things desirable in an animal which is most liable to exposure under all conditions of weather and is left so greatly to the care of servants. The Hackney Horse Society's records furnish some telling evidence concerning the soundness of the breed in the shape of statistics giving the number of horses rejected by the examining veterinary surgeons at the shows held during the last few years. Prior to 1896 the practice was to subject to veterinary examination only those

candidates in a class which the judges selected as likely to take the prizes. These are the figures for the half dozen years ended 1895 :—

Exhibition of.	Horses Examined.	Rejected as Unsound.	Percentage of Rejections.
1890	170	9	5·21
1891	116	4	3·44
1892	187	7	3·74
1893	249	8	3·21
1894	217	13	5·99
1895	223	4	1·79

In 1896 the system was altered and all horses that entered the ring were required to undergo veterinary examination before the judges looked at them. These are the figures for the past three exhibitions :—

1896	396	17	4·20
1897	438	23	5·47
1898	436	21	4·80

These percentages speak for themselves to those whose knowledge of equine matters enables them to appreciate their significance.

The soundness of the modern Hackney is merely one more proof of the results of selective care exercised for generations ; for nearly two hundred years the aim of the breeder of this horse has been the development of a robust and hardy constitution.

In the Hackney, therefore, we have shape, action, courage, manners, staying power, and soundness. What would you more ?

RBC
Fairman Rogers
636.14
G313.
1898

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of
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Veterinarian